

Government Field Notes

What are you doing?

On August 5, the Gold King Mine released water that was held above the mine tunnel, spilling about 3 million gallons of mine waste into Cement Creek a tributary of the Animas River. Even though the majority of the mine water from the event has passed, both EPA and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment continue to monitor the situation by sampling water and sediment to determine the long term course action.

Is it safe to use the river?

The data indicates that the river has returned to stable conditions that are not a concern for human health during typical recreational exposure. There will be some discoloration of the water when the sediment is disturbed, this discoloration does not pose an immediate health risk. The San Juan Basin Health Department concurs with the state health department findings, and advises that there are no adverse health effects from exposure to the water and sediment during normal recreational use (incidental or limited exposure). The San Juan Basin Health Department advises the public to avoid areas with orange sediment or discolored standing water. Further, anyone coming in contact with any orange sediment or discolored standing water should wash with soap and water.

How do I get more information?

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